

COLD TABLE WITH OPEN TOP

Field of the Invention

This invention relates to the field of cold tables for keeping food items cold while put out for serving.

Background of the Invention

Prior art known to the inventor regarding the present invention include the following United States Patents identified by patent number, copies of which are readily available in the United States Patent and Trademark Office and other locations throughout the United States to the general public and others having an interest in examination thereof:

6,267,111
6,209,346
5,727,857
4,852,741
4,739,580
4,706,817
4,574,594
4,375,758
2,522,322
1,800,863

Summary of the Invention

The cold table in accordance with the present invention comprises a table top assembly, a first folding leg assembly at one end of the table and a second folding leg assembly at the opposite end of the table. Each folding leg assembly comprises a pair of elongated legs connected together by a cross bar, and each leg assembly being hingedly connected to the table for pivoting between a folded position wherein the legs are substantially parallel to the underside of the table and adjacent thereto and an extended position wherein the legs extend downwardly from the underside of the table. Each

foldable leg assembly has a keeper mechanism described in greater detail herein below to hold the legs in their extended position when pivoted to that position. The table top assembly has integrally joined peripheral side walls and bottom wall, making it leakproof. The bottom wall is sloped from the peripheral edges toward a drain aperture in the center of the bottom wall whereby as ice water in the cavity of the table top assembly melts it runs down to the sloping bottom wall and the drain aperture. A drain conduit is connected to the drain aperture to carry the melting ice water away to a drain collector. The upwardly facing open wall of the table top assembly and of the cavity enables placing plates of food on top of the ice in the cavity to keep the food cold while being available for serving from the open top cold table. Ice can be readily added to the cavity to keep it full as the ice therein continues to melt and be drained away.

Brief Description of the Drawing

Fig. 1 is an elevation view of one side of a cold table in accordance with this invention shown in cross-section to illustrate the sloping bottom wall that slopes from the outer edges toward a drain aperture in the center and the arcuate peripheral joining portion that integrally joins the peripheral side wall to the sloping bottom wall.

Fig. 2 is an elevation view of the opposite side of the cold table shown in Fig. 1, this view in Fig. 2 also shown in cross section..

Fig. 3 is an elevation view of one end of a cold table in accordance with this invention shown in cross section to better illustrate the sloping bottom wall and arcuate peripheral joining portion that integrally joins the peripheral side wall to the sloping bottom wall.

Description of a Preferred Embodiment

A cold table in accordance with this invention comprises a table top assembly 2 having an open top wall 4, a first side wall 6 extending downwardly from said open top wall 4, a second side wall 8 extending downwardly from said open top wall 4, said second side wall 8 being spaced apart from and substantially parallel to said first side wall 6, a first end wall 10 extending downwardly from said open top wall 4 and extending laterally between said first side wall 6 and said second side wall 8 at one end thereof, and a second end wall 12 extending downwardly from said open top wall 4 and extending laterally between said first side wall 6 and said second side wall 8 at the opposite end thereof.

Each opposite end of the first and second side walls is integrally joined to a respective facing end of a respective one of the end walls 10 and 12 to provide an integrally formed leakproof peripheral side wall 14 and an integrally formed bottom peripheral edge 16. The integrally formed leakproof peripheral side wall 14 prevents liquid from dripping or leaking therethrough.

The table top assembly 2 also includes a bottom wall 18 that has an integrally joined peripheral edge 20 having the same configuration and dimension as the bottom peripheral edge 16 of the integrally joined leakproof peripheral side wall 14. The peripheral edge 20 of the bottom wall 18 is integrally joined to the bottom peripheral edge 16 of the peripheral side wall 14 to provide an integral connecting peripheral edge 22 between the peripheral side wall 14 and the bottom wall 18 that extends around the entire periphery of the table top assembly 2. The bottom wall 18 slopes downwardly from around its peripheral edge 20 to terminate downwardly and inwardly at its lowest point

24 in a drain outlet 26. The sloping bottom wall 18 is otherwise imperforate. A drain conduit 28 may be connected to the drain outlet 24 to drain fluid such as melted ice water from the cavity 30 of the table top assembly 2 formed by the integral leak proof peripheral side wall 14 and otherwise leak proof imperforate bottom wall 18.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the integral connecting peripheral edge 22 has an arcuate cross-sectional configuration with a concave surface 32 facing inwardly toward the cavity 30 of the table top assembly 2. Such construction facilitates the flow of melted ice water downwardly from along the peripheral side wall 14 to the sloping bottom wall 18 and on toward the drain outlet 24. Such construction prevents melted ice water and any debris therein from catching along a sharp angle of the connecting peripheral edge of prior art table top assemblies which do not have a connecting peripheral edge between the bottom and side walls that has an arcuate cross-sectional configuration with its concave surface facing inwardly of the cavity 30.

The cold table in accordance with this invention includes supporting legs 34, including a first folding leg assembly 36 at one end 38 of the cold table and a second folding leg assembly 40 at the opposite end of the cold table. The upper end 42 of each folding leg assembly is hingedly connected to respective hinge assemblies 44 provided on the underside 46 of the table top assembly 2, whereby the folding leg assemblies can be pivoted between a table supporting position wherein the legs 34 extend downwardly from the table top assembly 2 and a table storing position wherein the legs 34 extend substantially parallel to the underside 46 of the table top assembly and substantially adjacent thereto.

Foldable two part keeper members 48, having one elongated arm 50 hingedly connected to a second elongated arm 52, are provided for each of the legs 34 to hold them in the table supporting position when pivoted thereto. One end 54 of elongated arm 50 of each keeper member 48 is connected to the underside 46 of the table top assembly, extending therefrom at a diagonal to a mid-portion 56 of each respective leg 34 to which the end 58 of the elongated arm 52 is connected. A slidable locking sleeve 64 is provided for each keeper member 48, slidable from an unlocked position on elongated arm 50 to a locking position in which a portion of the elongated arm 52 from its end 58 inward is received into the facing end of the slidable locking sleeve 64 thereby preventing the keeper members 48 and folding leg assemblies 36 and 40 from being folded from their supporting position to their folded position while the locking sleeve 64 is in its said locking position. To move the folding leg assemblies to their supporting position, the locking sleeve 64 is slidably moved back on the elongated arm 50 until the end 58 of the elongated arm 52 clears the locking sleeve 64, whereupon the arms 50 and 52 of the keeper members 48 can be pivoted to allow the respective foldable leg assemblies 38 and 40 to be pivoted from their supporting position to their folded position.

To use the cold table in accordance with this invention, the folding leg assemblies 36 and 40 are pivoted from their folded position to their supporting position. The keeper members 48 pivot to their diagonal position as the leg assemblies pivot from their folded position to their supporting position. The locking sleeves 64 are then slid into their locking position on the arms 50 and 52 of the keeper members 64. The table top assembly 2 and its open top wall 4 then faces upwardly and ice cubes may then be placed in the cavity 30. A drain conduit 28 is then connected to the drain outlet 24 to drain melted ice

water from the cold table to a drain water collector. Plates of food may then be placed on top of the ice in the cavity 30. As the ice melts and is drained away, additional ice may be placed in the cavity 30 to keep the cold table in accordance with this invention constantly in use to cool food for an extended period of time.